



The Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness

Chairman Dan Burton (R ~ IN)

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CHAIRMAN BURTON TO ADDRESS THE ONGOING BRUTALITY OF THE CASTRO REGIME IN CUBA

-“Castro’s Cuba: What is the Proper United States Response to Ongoing Human Rights Violations in Our Hemisphere?”-

Washington, D.C. – According to the U.S. Department of State’s report, entitled *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2002*, “Cuba is a totalitarian state where human rights are violated every day.” The Castro regime has consistently responded to U.S. diplomatic initiatives with defiance and contempt. The Government Reform Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness will convene a hearing to discuss the current human rights violations in the island nation of Cuba, as well as how the United States should properly respond to permanently end those violations and usher in a free and democratic Cuba.

Congressman Dan Burton (R-IN), Chairman of the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Human Rights and Wellness, will hold an oversight hearing entitled, **“Castro’s Cuba: What is the Proper United States Response to Ongoing Human Rights Violations in Our Hemisphere?” on Thursday, October 16, 2003, in Room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building at 3:00 p.m.**

“For far too long, Cubans have endured repeated violations of their most basic human rights and have been forced to live under the brutal oppression of a tyrannical dictator, Fidel Castro,” stated Chairman Burton. “I whole-heartedly stand behind President Bush’s initiatives to hasten the arrival of a new, free, and democratic Cuba.”

Every year, thousands of Cuban defectors risk their lives in order to escape Castro’s brutal oppression, and attempt to brave the 90-mile sea voyage across the Gulf of Mexico to the United States on makeshift rafts. On August 31, 2003, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted a Cuban Air Force General and two Cuban MiG fighter pilots for shooting down two civilian airplanes belonging to *Brothers to the Rescue*, a non-profit humanitarian organization, while they were flying over international waters in 1996, killing four unarmed exile activists.

In an immediate response to this deplorable act and years of egregious human rights violations by the Castro regime, Congressman Burton, then Chairman of the House International Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, introduced the *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act* (H.R. 927, also known as *the Helms-Burton Act* or *the LIBERTAD Act*). *The Helms-Burton Act* placed

trade sanctions on the Castro government, as well as outlined a plan for the support of a transitional government that would eventually lead to a democratically elected Cuban government.

The Subcommittee will receive testimony from the Honorable Roger Noriega, Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere, to further discuss new United States policy initiatives on Cuba. The Honorable Adolfo Franco, Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean, will offer testimony regarding the U.S. Agency for International Development's efforts to promote and develop democracy in Cuba. In addition, Mr. R. Richard Newcomb, the Director of the Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, will testify on the current status of U.S. economic sanctions placed on Cuba. Finally, the Subcommittee will hear testimony from representatives of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Center for a Free Cuba, to explain the severity of recent human rights violations in present-day Cuba.

PANEL ONE WITNESSES:

The Honorable Roger Noriega
Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere
United States Department of State

The Honorable Adolfo Franco
Assistant Administrator for Latin America and the Caribbean
United States Agency for International Development

Mr. R. Richard Newcomb
Director, Office of Foreign Assets Control
United States Department of Treasury

PANEL TWO WITNESSES:

Mr. Frank Calzon
Executive Director
Center for a Free Cuba

Ms. Alexandra Arriaga
Director of Government Relations
Amnesty International

Mr. Tom Malinowski
Washington Advocacy Director
Human Rights Watch

This is the Subcommittee's first hearing regarding human rights violations in Cuba. For more information, or to look at hearing resource materials, please visit Chairman Burton's designated human rights section on his website at www.house.gov/burton/humanrights.